

people understand that the terrorists who attacked the United States do not represent all Muslims, just like those who commit hate crimes against Americans of Muslim or Middle Eastern origin do not represent all Americans. The more that we understand one another, the greater the chance for peace.

THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE AS A CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. AKAKA. Madam President, I rise today to call attention to the dedicated men and women in our Federal workforce and the invaluable contributions they make to our Nation.

The tragic events three weeks ago appropriately has focused our attention on new ways to protect our Nation's critical infrastructure. A number of activities have been identified including communication, emergency services, and transportation. All are essential to the running of our country. However, on September 11 we were all quickly reminded of another critical infrastructure—our Federal Government and its workforce. For every essential service these attacks disrupted, we expected our government to respond quickly and effectively—and those in government did. Our Nation's recovery will be aided because of the talents and professionalism of our Federal workforce.

Like us all, I was struck by the heroism of rescue workers in the moments following the events of September 11. Law enforcement officers, firefighters, and others raced into buildings to save lives. Teachers calmed children in schools and kept them safe from the surrounding horrors. Local officials executed response plans and coordinated resources. These are among the many examples we will long remember.

Representatives from the Federal Government worked side by side with those brave and selfless local and State heroes. Various federal agencies responded to immediate social and community needs by providing temporary food and shelter, emergency child care, and other support services. At ground-zero, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, and other Federal agencies worked with State and local rescue workers. They set up emergency and coordinated disaster responses, opened communications, and provided needed medical assistance. Federal transportation agencies worked with industry to put our air, rail, and road networks back into operation. Our Federal Law Enforcement Officers and intelligence specialists spent long hours in intense investigations to track down the terrorists and their networks. More than 2,100 federal employees were deployed in disaster response teams alone, not counting the thousands of others who responded to this national crisis as a part of their normal duties.

Despite the attacks, Americans were able to rely on their government. We received our mail. The Federal Govern-

ment ensured the stability of our financial markets and Americans were able to count on the reliability of their banks.

Our Federal workforce responded in other ways not as immediately obvious, but just as important to our country's needs. Federal employees ensured the availability of a clean blood supply and monitored the quality of our air and water. Aid was provided through the timely processing of claims for survivors of victims and financial assistance for those not covered by unemployment insurance. Special loans were made available to small businesses and residents displaced by the disaster.

Despite the events of September 11, our Nation is functioning and recovering. This is due in part to the efforts of our Federal workforce whose response was immediate and thorough. The Federal workforce is this nation's backbone. Our ability to be resolute in confronting a faceless enemy is partially attributable to the strength of our backbone. We can take comfort and pride in the resilience and fortitude of our government workers.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY in March of this year. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred May 25, 2001 in Honolulu, HI. Two teens were charged with attempted murder after allegedly dousing the tents of gay campers, while people were inside, with flammable liquid and setting one on fire in Polihale State Park. Police believe the crime is a hate crime based on "insinuations and remarks" made by the suspects at the time. Victims in the attack said the perpetrators threw rocks and shouted homosexual slurs at about 20 men prior to setting the tent on fire.

I believe that government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation, we can change hearts and minds as well.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN HONOR OF ALDERMAN JAMES BALCER

• Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise today to honor a man who has served not only the City of Chicago with tireless dedication but who has served his county with selfless valor. Alderman James Balcer is a hero by any definition, and the Bronze Star re-

cently pinned to his chest is only a token symbol of a life marked by bravery and service.

The people of Chicago know Jim Balcer as Alderman Balcer, representing the 11th ward on the City Council. They know him as a strong advocate for the city's veterans and as an effective voice for his community. Few know more about military history or are more dedicated to understanding the challenges facing those who have fought for our country. During his four years on the city council, Alderman Balcer has worked tirelessly for his constituents and sung their praises without so much as a note from his own horn.

But long before he was Alderman Balcer, Jim was Pfc. Balcer in the U.S. Marine Corps. As an 18-year-old soldier more familiar with the streets of his home area of Bridgeport than the jungles of southeast Asia, Balcer was a member of the 9th Marine Regiment during the Vietnam War. In late February of 1969, Pfc. Balcer and his company were holding their position on a hilltop in the A Shau Valley in Laos. As a group of the soldiers descended into the valley below on a reconnaissance mission, enemy fire erupted from the dense foliage, trapping the group in a hail of bullets and shrapnel.

With dozens of young Marines killed and wounded at the bottom of the hill, it was Pfc. Jim Balcer who volunteered to lead the mission to rescue them. Through that long Laotian night, in the pouring rain and deep, treacherous mud, Balcer made trip after trip into the valley to reach his fallen comrades. Half-hour descents through the jungle were followed by nearly four hours of backbreaking climbs up steep and slippery embankments, under enemy fire and carrying makeshift stretchers made from ponchos.

Thanks to Pfc. Balcer and his fellow Marines, every member of the 9th Regiment who went into the valley that night in 1969 came out. The Bronze Star is given to soldiers who distinguish themselves "by heroic or meritorious achievement or service . . . while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States or while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force." Ordinary language to describe extraordinary courage, but hardly enough to describe the actions of someone who to this day still tells his own story without a hint of bravado.

The City of Chicago is fortunate to have someone so tenacious and selfless on its side. Alderman Jim Balcer is as dedicated to Chicago and its people now as he was to his fellow soldiers then. A man of integrity and honor, he is to be commended on receiving the Bronze Star. Wear it proudly, Jim, for we are proud of you.●